

“Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.” Proverbs chapter 16 verse 3

That sounds simple, doesn't it? Just tell God what you are planning to do, and he will make sure it is successful. Well, unsurprisingly there's more to it than that.

Remember Pinocchio, the story of the puppet who became a real boy? Do you remember the song he sang in Disney's version of the story? “I've got no strings to hold me down/to make me fret or make me frown/I had strings, but now I'm free/there are no strings on me.”

He thought he could do whatever he wanted without any thought for anyone else or for the consequences of what he did. He soon got into trouble. He may not have had physical strings, but there are other things that constrain our actions. There are the strings of ethics, morality and responsibility towards God and others and ourselves. Yes, he was free to do as he wanted, but he would have done well to follow the counsel of the apostle Paul; “Everything is permissible, but not everything is beneficial.”

When God made people, he didn't make puppets with no will of their own, controlled by strings from on high. He made us free to choose our actions. That means that God has chosen to work with us in carrying out his plans and purposes in our lives and in the world. So when we commit what we want to do to the Lord, we need to try to make sure that what we want to do is in line with what God wants to do. We can learn something about what God wants us to do from his word, the Bible, and from the leading of our consciences guided by his Holy Spirit.

But even then it can sometimes be difficult to know, in certain circumstances, what is the right way to go. That is because we are a complex mixture of desires and motives, the decisions we have to make are seldom straightforward and it is not always easy to be certain that what we are planning to do is what God would want us to do. But the Bible assures us that, if we submit our plans to God as an act of spiritual worship, then we will come to know what his good and perfect will is, and he will be able to bring it about in our lives.

If that sounds a bit vague, then it is. Our dealings with God are relational, not systematic. They emerge from our connection and engagement with him. They are personal and they are released into our lives by faith.

## Prayer

Father, often I find myself immobilised by indecision about what path I should take in any given situation. I want to do what is right, but I am confused by the desires, instincts and mixed motives that battle for priority in my life. Please help me to discern your will, and if that is not always crystal clear, to commit my way forward to you, trusting that you are able to guide me to success on your terms, not mine. In Jesus' name, amen.

*All these devotionals can be found on our website [inghamitechurch.org](http://inghamitechurch.org) on the 'Resources' page. Click on the link to go there.*